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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Project No. 2179-043 – California;
Project No. 2467-020 – California]

Merced Irrigation District, Pacific Gas and Electric Company;
Notice of Availability of the
Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Merced River and Merced Falls
Hydroelectric Projects and Intention to Hold Public Meetings

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission or FERC) regulations contained in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)(18 CFR Part 380 [FERC Order No. 486, 52 FR 47897]), the Office of Energy Projects has reviewed the applications for license for the Merced River Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2179), and the Merced Falls Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2467) and prepared a draft multi-project environmental impact statement (EIS) for the projects.

Both projects are located on the Merced River. The Merced River Project consists of the New Exchequer and McSwain developments, which are located at river miles (RM) 62.5 and 56.3, respectively, about 23 miles northeast of the city of Merced in Mariposa County, California. The Merced River Project occupies 3,154.9 acres of federal land administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Merced Falls Project is located at RM 55 on the border of Merced and Mariposa Counties, California. The Merced Falls Project occupies 1.0 acre of federal land administered by BLM.

The draft EIS contains staff's analysis of the applicants' proposals and the alternatives for relicensing the Merced River and Merced Falls Projects. The draft EIS documents the views of governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, affected Indian tribes, the public, the license applicants, and Commission staff.

A copy of the draft EIS is available for review at the Commission or may be viewed on the Commission's website at <http://www.ferc.gov>, using the "e-Library" link. Enter the docket number, excluding the last three digits, to access the document. For

assistance, contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or toll-free at (866) 208-3676, or for TTY, contact (202) 502-8659.

You may also register online at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/esubscription.asp> to be notified via email of new filings and issuances related to this or other pending projects. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support.

All comments must be filed by **Friday, May 29, 2015**, and should reference Project Nos. 2179-043 and 2467-020. The Commission strongly encourages electronic filing. Please file comments using the Commission's eFiling system at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/efiling.asp>. Commenters can submit brief comments up to 6,000 characters, without prior registration, using the eComment system at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/ecomment.asp>. You must include your name and contact information at the end of your comments. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support. In lieu of electronic filing, please send a paper copy to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20426.

Anyone may intervene in this proceeding based on this draft EIS (18 CFR 380.10). You must file your request to intervene as specified above. You do not need intervenor status to have your comments considered.

In addition to or in lieu of sending written comments, you are invited to attend public meetings that will be held to receive comments on the draft EIS. The agency scoping meeting will focus on resource agency and non-governmental organization input, while the public scoping meeting is primarily for public input. All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited to attend one or both of the meetings. The time and locations of the meetings are as follows:

Agency Meeting

DATE : Thursday, April 30, 2015
TIME : 10:00 am
PLACE : El Capitan Lodge at the Merced County Fairgrounds
ADDRESS : 900 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Merced, CA 95341

Public Meeting

DATE : Thursday, April 30, 2015
TIME : 6:00 pm
PLACE : San Joaquin Hall at the Merced County Fairgrounds
ADDRESS : 900 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Merced, CA 95341

At these meetings, resource agency personnel and other interested persons will have the opportunity to provide oral and written comments and recommendations regarding the draft EIS. The meetings will be recorded by a court reporter, and all

statements (verbal and written) will become part of the Commission's public record for the project. These meetings are posted on the Commission's calendar located at <http://www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventsList.aspx> along with other related information.

For further information, please contact Matt Buhyoff at (202) 502-6824 or at matt.buhyoff@ferc.gov.

Dated: April 15, 2015.

Kimberly D. Bose,
Secretary.

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